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ÉDOUARD CHAVANNES

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ÉDOUARD CHAVANNES, professor of Chinese literature at the Collège de France, died in Paris on January 29, 1918, at the age of fifty-two years. Born at Lyons on October 5, 1865, he was sent on a scientific mission to China in 1889, being attached to the French Legation at Peking till 1893. In 1893 he was appointed professor at the Collège de France, where he opened his courses with a lecture entitled 'Du Rôle social de la littérature chinoise' (published in the *Revue bleue*, 1893). In 1903 he became a member of the Institut de France. He was also directeur d'études honoraire à l'École des Hautes Études, corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and an honorary member of the Société Franco-Japonaise of Paris, the Société Finno-Ougrienne, the Royal Asiatic Society, and our own Society (elected last year). His premature death is an irreparable loss to the scientific world, and will be regretted by the entire community of orientalists, for the magnitude of Chavannes' work rests on the fact that he was not merely a sinologue in the narrow, old-fashioned sense of this misused word, but an orientalist and historian of eminent learning and insight, with a broad-minded vision and unusual intellectual powers coupled with almost superhuman activity and unbounded capacity for research. Of all great sinologues whom France has produced, he was doubtless the most vigorous, the most intelligent, and the most successful. There is no branch of sinology to which he has not made profound contributions of permanent value. His memory will live, and his immense labor will bear fruit, as long as there is an oriental science in this world.

Chavannes' first literary production was 'Le Traité sur les sacrifices Fong et Chan de Se-ma Ts'ien, traduit en français,' published in the third volume of the now defunct *Journal of the Peking Oriental Society* (1890). This work already displays the characteristics of the mature scholar: the tendency to open new and original resources, mastery of Chinese style,

accuracy and elegance of translation, and critical, philological treatment of the subject. This first essay matured in him the magnificent plan of elaborating a complete translation of Se-ma Ts'ien's *Shi ki*, the oldest of the twenty-four Chinese Annals. The first volume of this work, *Les Mémoires historiques de Se-ma Ts'ien traduits et annotés*, appeared in Paris, 1895, with an introduction of 249 pages, which is a masterpiece of historical and critical analysis and is not surpassed by anything of this character written before or after him. Five volumes of this monumental work, consisting altogether of 3051 pages, were brought out, the last being published in 1905. The translation comprises the first 47 of Se-ma Ts'ien's 130 chapters, and is accompanied by a full commentary and indices. It is a fundamental source-book for the ancient history of China and a marvelous storehouse of erudition. There are many appendices dealing with special problems or subjects of general interest, like the essay 'Des Rapports de la musique grecque avec la musique chinoise' (3. 630).

Chavannes not only placed historical studies on a new and solid basis, but also inaugurated sound archaeological research by his volume *La Sculpture sur pierre en Chine au temps des deux dynasties Han* (1893). In 1907 he paid his second visit to China, chiefly for the study of ancient monuments and inscriptions. The important results of this mission were published in a sumptuous album (*Mission archéologique dans la Chine septentrionale*, 1909), consisting of 488 plates. Of the descriptive portion two volumes have thus far appeared, *La Sculpture à l'époque des Han* (1913) and *La Sculpture bouddhique* (1915). It is hoped that more of this material will be published from his posthumous papers. One of his greatest achievements is presented by the decipherment and translation of the business documents written on wood and found in Turkistan (*Les Documents chinois découverts par A. Stein dans les sables du Turkestan oriental*, Oxford, 1913). In connection with R. Petrucci he studied the Chinese paintings of the Musée Cernuschi (*La Peinture chinoise au Musée Cernuschi*, 1914); another briefer study is again devoted to Buddhist art (*Six Monuments de la sculpture chinoise*, 1914). In his *Documents sur les Tou-kiue (Turcs) occidentaux* (1903) he gave a complete collection of all Chinese sources concerning the history of the

Western Turks and a correlation of the Chinese with all available occidental documents.

Chavannes was interested also in the great religions, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Nestorianism, and Manicheism. In 1894 he published his *Mémoire composé à l'époque de la grande dynastie T'ang sur les religieux éminents qui allèrent chercher la loi dans les pays d'occident par I-Tsing*, which contains the biographies and travels of sixty (mostly Chinese) monks who went to India in the second half of the seventh century in search of Sanskrit books. In co-operation with S. Lévi he translated the itinerary of Wu K'ung (*Journal asiatique*, 1895). His 'Voyage de Song Yun dans l'Udyāna et le Gandhāra' appeared in the *Bulletin de l'École française* (1903). The best fruit of his labors in this field is represented by the monumental work *Cinq cents contes et apologues extraits du Tripitaka chinois*, published in three volumes (Paris, 1910-11); a fourth volume containing notes and indices has been promised and, I believe, prepared for the press. This fine collection of Indian stories has given many a stimulus to the comparative study of folk-lore. Also his translations of the life of Guṇavarman, Jinagupta, and Seng-Hui (*T'oung Pao*, 1904, 1905, 1909), his 'Quelques titres énigmatiques dans la hiérarchie ecclésiastique du bouddhisme indien' and 'Les Seize Arhat protecteurs de la loi' (*JA* 1915, 1916, the two last-named in collaboration with S. Lévi) should be mentioned in this connection.

His book *Le T'ai Chan, essai de monographie d'un culte chinois* (Paris, 1910, 591 p.) is devoted to the indigenous religion of China and represents a wonderfully complete and fundamental study of an ancient mountain-cult, based on personal investigation and on all available documents both literary and epigraphical. In 1897 he contributed to the *Journal asiatique* a remarkable study on 'Le Nestorianisme et l'inscription de Kara-Balgassoun.' In collaboration with P. Pelliot he edited and translated in 1912 a Manichean treatise, written in Chinese and discovered by Pelliot in the caves of Tun-huang, Kan-su. This is perhaps the most brilliant achievement of modern sinology.

As an epigraphist, Chavannes deserves the highest praise: in this branch of research he was truly a pioneer and reformer, the

first European scholar who approached this difficult subject with sound and critical methods and undisputed success. In 1893 he published in the *Journal asiatique* a study on 'Les Inscriptions des Ts'in' (re-edited in his *Mémoires de Se-ma Ts'ien*, 2. 544). The Chinese inscriptions of Bodh-Gayā engaged his attention in two articles (*Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 34, 36). When Prince Roland Bonaparte edited his luxurious work *Documents de l'époque mongole*, Chavannes undertook the translation of the Chinese portion of the inscription of Kiü-yung-kuan. In 1902 the Académie des Inscriptions issued his *Dix inscriptions chinoises de l'Asie centrale*. His 'Inscriptions et pièces de chancellerie chinoises de l'époque mongole' (*T'oung Pao*, 1904, 1905, 1908) contain seventy-six documents in text and translation; he was the first to penetrate successfully into the peculiar official style of the Mongol epoch. The inscriptions of Yün-nan occupied him in 'Une Inscription du royaume de Nan-tchao' (*JA* 1900), 'Quatre inscriptions du Yun-nan' (*JA* 1909), and 'Trois inscriptions relevées par M. Sylvain Charria' (*T'oung Pao*, 1906). His 'Les Deux plus anciens spécimens de la cartographie chinoise' (*Bull. de l'École française*, 3) is a most important contribution to the history of cartography.

The number of articles written by Chavannes is legion. Special mention may be made of his 'Voyageurs chinois chez les Khitan et les Joutchen' (*JA* 1897-98), 'Les Prix de vertu en Chine' (published by the Institut de France, 1904), 'Les Livres chinois avant l'invention du papier' (*JA* 1905), 'Les Pays d'occident d'après le Wei lio' (*T'oung Pao*, 1905), 'Le Cycle ture des douze animaux,' and 'Trois généraux chinois' (*ib.* 1906), 'Les Pays d'occident d'après le Heou Han chou' (*ib.* 1907), 'Le Royaume de Wou et de Yüe' (*ib.* 1916), and 'L'Instruction d'un futur empereur de Chine en 1193' (*Mémoires concernant l'Asie orientale*, 1. 1913). For the series *La Science française* published by L. Poincaré for the Panama-Pacific Exposition he wrote a brief sketch on the development of sinology in France. In conjunction with H. Cordier, who founded the *T'oung Pao* in 1890, he edited that Journal from 1904 onward till his departure.